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ABSTRACT

A study was conducted at Surry Community College in North Carolina to determine whether there was any significant difference between the academic success of those students who had passed the General Educational Development Test (GED) and those traditional students who had graduated from a public or private high school. Study methodology involved a comparison of the college transcripts of the 37 GED students enrolled at Surry during the 1977-78 academic year with those of 37 randomly selected traditional students. Mean grade point averages (GPA's) were determined for each group and submitted to a "t" test to find out whether there was a significant difference (at the .05 level) between them. Findings indicate that GPA's for traditional students ranged from 4.00 to 1.15, while the range for GED students was 4.00 to 0.88. Though the mean GPA for traditional students was higher than that of the GED group (2.93 compared to 2.75), the difference was not significant. Recommendations are included in the study report. (JP)

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A STUDY TO COMPARE THE ACADEMIC SUCCESS OF THE GENERAL EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT TEST GRADUATES AND THE HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES AT SURRY COMMUNITY COLLEGE FOR THE 1977-1978 ACADEMIC YEAR

by

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Surry Community College

A PRACTICUM PRESENTED TO NOVA UNIVERSITY IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

For several years a difference of opinion has existed regarding the potential for success of the General Educational Development (GED) Test graduate in post high school studies. When as adult entered the high school completion program for preparation leading to passing the GED he often expressed a concern about the value of the GED certificate. Administrators, counselors, instructors, and employers also expressed concern about the academic ability of the GED Test graduate.

This study involved thirty-seven GED graduates and the same number of regular high school graduates enrolled at Surry Community College for the 1977-1978 academic year. The regular high school students were selected at random from the student population after the GED students were taken out. This selection was made by numbering each transcript in the non-GED group. Corresponding numbers were placed in a box and thirty-seven were drawn out to comprise the control group. The number of GED students was manageable therefore the number in this entire group was used. The thirty-seven transcripts in each group were evaluated by finding the individual quality point averages. The mean quality point average for each group was then calculated. The total mean quality point average for the GED group was 2.75 compared with a mean quality point average of 2.93 for the regular high school group. The t-test for determining the significance between two independent means was

used. At the .05 level of significance the critical value of "t" was 1.671. Since the calculated value of "t" was 1.16 and did not exceed the critical value of "t" (1.671) the null hypothesis was not rejected. There was no significant difference between the quality point averages or the academic success of the two groups.

The following recommendations were made as a result of this study:

1. General Educational Development Test graduates should be encouraged to attend college.

2. College admissions offices should enroll GED Test graduates on the same basis as traditional high school graduates.

3. Educators should publish information on the success of GED Test graduates.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION 2

BACKGROUND AND SIGNIFICANCE 3

PROCEDURES 6

RESULTS 9

DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS 10

APPENDIXES 12

REFERENCES 16

INTRODUCTION

For many years a difference of opinion has existed relative to the academic ability of the General Educational Development (GED) Test graduate as compared with the regular high school graduate enrolled at Surry Community College. Adults enrolled in the high school completion program for the purpose of preparing for the GED Examination have expressed concern over the value of the GED certificate. Employers and institutions of higher learning have also expressed this concern.

It was the purpose of this study to compare the academic success, as measured by grade point averages, of the GED Test graduate with the academic success of the traditional high school graduate enrolled at Surry Community College for the 1977-1978 academic year. It was expected that this study would make information available to students, counselors, instructors, and employers relative to the academic success of GED Test graduates enrolled at Surry Community College.

For the purpose of this study the student population for the 1977-1978 academic year at Surry Community College was divided into two groups. One group was made up of the thirty-seven GED Test graduates and the second group was composed of thirty-seven traditional high school graduates. The college transcripts of each of the seventy-four students

involved in this study were pulled and the following data for each individual was obtained: (1) the number of credit hours, (2) the number of quality points earned, and (3) the quality point average. This information was organized into two tables (Appendix I and Appendix II). The mean quality point average for each group was calculated. The standard deviation for each group was determined and a t-test was selected to test the null hypothesis. A level of significance at the .05 level was used for the purpose of this study.

BACKGROUND AND SIGNIFICANCE

Very little research has been done which compares the academic success of the GED Test graduate with the traditional high school graduate in college programs. The need for research in this area has grown in importance as the number of GED Test graduates enrolled in institutions of higher learning has increased.

Two administrators at Surry Community College have expressed a need for information about the academic success of GED Test graduates. The Dean of Students expressed the importance such information would have for the counseling staff. The president of the college stated in a memorandum of January 30, 1978 (Appendix III) that the Board of Trustees needs information on how the "various segments of our population perform."

A review of background information pointed to the importance of the GED Test to higher education. At the end of World War II thousands of veterans wanted college vocational, technical, or academic training. Many of these veterans did not have the high school diploma required for admission to most college institutions. The American Council on Education (1968b) established in 1945 the Veteran's Testing Service. The purpose of this organization was to make the GED Test available to veterans across the country. As the GED Test became available to more people it also became more popular as a means to meet high school requirements. By 1959 more nonveteran adults than veterans were taking the GED Test.

Each state has set its own requirement scores for graduation through the GED program (American Council on Education, 1968a). This information has been published in a variety of forms. The North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (1973) published a pamphlet called "Questions and Answers" to make information on the GED Test available to the public.

The development and use of the GED Test has grown considerably since its development in 1942, however, little research has been done which compares the academic success of the GED Test graduate with the academic success of the

regular high school graduate. Sharon's study (1972) looked at one aspect of this problem in his effort to predict the academic success of non-high school graduates in college through their GED Test scores. His work showed that many GED graduates do succeed in college. An article in Open Door (Spring 1977) featured a GED graduate from Surry Community College who did well in his college studies. A study by Tyler (1954) and a study by Dressel and Schmid (1951) also concluded that large numbers of GED Test graduates do succeed in college programs.

The question of how GED Test graduates compare in college grade point averages with traditional high school graduates has remained unanswered. As the number of GED students applying for college admission has increased so has the need to study this question. In February 1978 at Guilford Technical Institute in Greensboro, North Carolina, Governor James B. Hunt presented the one-hundred thousandth GED certificate to emphasize the growing importance of the GED program in North Carolina.

This study was quasi-experimental in nature and involved the use and knowledge of information from the "Applied Educational Research and Evaluation" Module as composed by Nova University. It included the need to understand and use such terms as "population", "sample", "control

group", "mean", and "standard deviation". It involved using a null hypothesis and appropriate statistical tools.

PROCEDURES

For the purpose of this study the transcripts of all the students enrolled at Surry Community College for the 1977-1978 academic year were divided into two groups. One group was made up of the transcripts of the GED Test graduates and the second group was composed of the transcripts of all the other students which were the traditional high school graduates. The first group had a total of thirty-seven students. The second group or the traditional graduate group was composed of 1350 students. A random sample of the traditional graduate group was made to equal the number in the GED group. This random sample was made by numbering the transcripts of all the students in this group. Corresponding numbers were written on one-inch slips of paper and mixed in a box. Numbers were drawn from the box to equal the number of students in the GED group. The number on each slip drawn was used to determine the transcript used from this group. The entire group of GED students was used since this number was manageable.

The transcripts of the seventy-four students involved in this study were used to obtain the following data on

each student: (1) the number of credit hours, (2) the number of quality points earned, and (3) the quality point average. This information was arranged into two tables (Appendix I and Appendix II). Table I listed the number of credit hours, the number of quality points earned, and the quality point average for each of the thirty-seven GED students. Table II listed the number of credit hours, the number of quality points earned, and the quality point average of each of the thirty-seven traditional high school graduates.

The mean quality point average of both the GED group and the traditional group was determined. These two numbers provided the basis for testing the hypothesis in this study. The null hypothesis was: There is no significant difference between the mean grade point averages of the two groups (H_o: $\bar{X}_1 = \bar{X}_2$). The alternative hypothesis was: The mean grade point average of the GED group is greater than (less than) that of the regular high school graduate group (H_a: $\bar{X}_1 \neq \bar{X}_2$). The level of difference used to reject or accept the null hypothesis was at the .05 level of significance. The t-test was used for testing the significance of the difference between the two independent means.

For the purpose of this study it was assumed that: (1) GED Test graduates were as intelligent as the traditional high school graduates; (2) each of the two groups studied

came from similar economic and social backgrounds; (3) both groups had members in vocational, technical, and college transfer courses; and (4) the 1977-1978 academic school year would be representative of other school years in terms of the relationship of grade point averages between the two groups used for this study.

The following limitations were found in this study:

1. A smaller number of GED Test graduates was available than was expected.

2. This study encompassed the 1977-1978 academic year, however, some students registered for the first time spring term, 1978, and had earned no credit hours or quality points. These students were not used in this study.

3. A student who had taken one course with a grade point average of 4.0 was given the same consideration (see Appendix I and II) as a student who had taken several courses with a grade point average of 4.0.

4. No difference was considered for vocational, technical and college transfer students.

For this study the following definitions were used for the terms indicated:

1. General Educational Development Test graduate. A General Educational Development (GED) Test graduate was interpreted as being an individual having completed the

GED Test with a total standard test score of at least 225, with no single standard test score below 35.

2. High school graduate. A high school graduate was interpreted as meaning an individual having graduated from a public or non-public high school.

3. Quality point average. The quality point average was determined by dividing the number of quality points earned by the number of hours in which a grade was received.

4. Quality point scale. The quality point scale used for the purposes of this study was based on 4 points for an A, 3 points for a B, 2 points for a C, 1 point for a D, and 0 points for a F.

RESULTS

The thirty-seven traditional high school graduates had a quality point average range from 4.00 to 1.15. The traditional group had a total mean quality point average of 2.93 and a standard deviation of .6601 (see Appendix II). The GED Test graduates had a quality point average range from 4.00 to .88. This group had a total mean quality point average of 2.75 and a standard deviation of .6694 (see Appendix I). The level of significance selected to test the hypothesis was at the .05 level. The t-test for determining the significance between two independent sample means was used. At

the .05 level of significance the critical value of "t" was 1.671. Since the calculated value of "t" was 1.16 and did not exceed the critical value of "t" (1.671) the null hypothesis was not rejected. There was no significant difference between the quality point averages or the academic success of the two groups.

DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The results of this study supported earlier statements by Tyler (1954), Dressel and Schmid (1951), and Sharon (1972) that many GED Test graduates have done well in their college studies. This study further indicated that GED Test graduates were not significantly different in grade point averages from the regular high school graduates at Surry Community College.

This study has provided information for counselors, instructors, administration, students, and employers relative to the academic success of the GED Test graduate. This information has provided the basis for improved educational services for the GED students.

The following recommendations were made as a result of this study:

1. General Educational Development Test graduates should be encouraged to attend college.

2. College admissions offices should enroll GED Test graduates on the same basis as traditional high school graduates.

3. Educators should publish information on the success of GED Test graduates in college.

A brief statement of the findings of this study will be made available to the groups of people concerned with the GED Test graduate. This information is expected to result in a new prospective of the GED Test graduate by faculty, students, counselors, administrator, and employers. The counseling, teaching, placement, and employment services are expected to be improved as a result of this study.

APPENDIXES

APPENDIX I

GENERAL EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT TEST GROUP

Student	Credit Hours	Quality Points	Quality Point Average
1	4	16	4.00
2	116	430	3.71
3	107	395	3.69
4	8	29	3.63
5	178	644	3.62
6	66	236	3.58
7	92	318	3.46
8	62	204	3.29
9	199	646	3.25
10	104	332	3.19
11	28	89	3.18
12	35	111	3.17
13	77	244	3.17
14	95	296	3.12
15	8	24	3.00
16	3	9	3.00
17	90	257	2.86
18	39	111	2.85
19	40	110	2.75
20	46	126	2.74
21	100	270	2.70
22	90	224	2.49
23	34	83	2.44
24	147	358	2.44
25	17	41	2.41
26	13	31	2.38
27	154	361	2.34
28	62	143	2.31
29	34	78	2.29
30	64	136	2.13
31	142	289	2.04
32	3	6	2.00
33	41	82	2.00
34	41	82	2.00
35	39	71	1.82
36	87	157	1.80
37	24	21	.88

sum of quality point averages = 101.73 $\bar{X}$ = 2.75 s = .6694

APPENDIX II

REGULAR HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATE GROUP

Student	Credit Hours	Quality Points	Quality Point Average
1	2	8	4.00
2	15	60	4.00
3	3	12	4.00
4	17	65	3.82
5	18	68	3.78
6	70	250	3.57
7	10	36	3.60
8	65	223	3.43
9	83	279	3.36
10	9	30	3.33
11	11	36	3.27
12	29	93	3.21
13	5	16	3.20
14	48	150	3.13
15	68	209	3.07
16	18	55	3.06
17	16	49	3.06
18	25	76	3.04
19	60	182	3.03
20	3	9	3.00
21	16	48	3.00
22	96	286	2.98
23	14	39	2.79
24	14	39	2.79
25	17	47	2.76
26	23	60	2.61
27	70	180	2.57
28	86	220	2.56
29	15	37	2.47
30	49	120	2.45
31	58	142	2.45
32	85	207	2.44
33	92	182	1.98
34	74	138	1.86
35	25	44	1.76
36	8	14	1.75
37	13	15	1.15

sum of quality point averages = 108.33 $\bar{X}$ = 2.93 s = .6601

APPENDIX III

SURRY COMMUNITY COLLEGE

DOBSON, NORTH CAROLINA 27017
TELEPHONE 386-8121

MEMORANDUM

TO: Claude Ayers, Dean of Continuing Education

FROM: Swanson Richards, President SR

DATE: January 30, 1978

In reference to our conversation concerning a study of GED graduates at Surry Community College, it is my opinion that this study would supply our institution with excellent information that is needed.

I encourage you to study the success of those graduates who enroll in regular courses and programs at Surry Community College.

The Board of Trustees also needs this type of descriptive information that will inform them of how various segments of our population perform.

I wish for you the best of success in this endeavor.

SR:ssj

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